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Andrzej W. Skalski (1938-1996)



The lepidopterists' community, especially those interested in the Lepidoptera systematics, phylogeny and paleontology, lost a great friend and high level professional lepidopterist in the passing of Andrzej Wadysaw Skalski on 16 September 1996. He is survived by his wife, Barbara and daughter, Marta Skalska-Polańska. This sudden loss is equally sad for Poland and Europe where he served in key positions in the Polish Entomological Society (and its Lepidopterology Section as vice president) as well as more than 30 other societies, scientific and public organisations. He was an active SEL member since 1977, an outstanding participant of almost all SEL Congresses. He was also a reputed authority in biospeleology, groundwater Amphipoda systematics, hydrobiology and nature conservancy.

Andrzej Skalski, son of school teachers Zygmunt Skalski and Magdalena of Latacz family, was born in Cracow on 14 May 1938. Interested in natural history as a boy, he considered this a qualification for later professional study. He was educated at Plastic Arts Lyceum in Cracow, General Education Lyceum in Chrzanów, and Division of Biology and Earth Sciences of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (graduated as Magister of Sciences in 1963). He received his Natural Sciences Doctor degree from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 1978. During 27 years, from 1964 to 1991, he worked in the Regional Museum of Częstochowa, where he passed a carrier from junior research assistant and collections keeper to the Head of Natural History Division and Director of the Museum. At the same time and later on, until his death, he worked in Częstochowa Polytechnic Institute (Institute of Environment Engineering), Pedagogical High School as a lecturer of different biological and environmental disciplines, and in Environment Protection Inspectorate in Częstochowa.

Two major trends in his research interest have been formed during his early times, persisted up to his death : phylogenetics and systematics of the Lepidoptera and underground life with special emphasis to Amphipoda (mainly *Niphargus* and related genera). He published a number of papers on the Lepidoptera systematics and faunistics, paying much attention to the fossil forms, first of all those persisted as inclusions in the fossil resins, mostly in Baltic amber ; he also studied amber Lepidoptera deposited in numerous musea world over in order to establish their relationships with recent forms as a base for classification. This has resulted in the description of numerous new species and genera. Andrzej must be regarded as a sole expert of the amber Lepidoptera who continued classical work of N. J. Kuznetsov (1941). He was also interested in insect paleoecology within Tertiary period. The study of evolutionary mechanisms and faunal history have been the common base for these seemingly remote trends in his activity. His scientific interests were always focused upon the history of the environment, its biological diversity, present state, threats and conservation.

Andrzej Skalski explored different parts of Europe (including Ukraine and Crimea), remote areas of the Near East, Far East Russia, Japan, India, South-East Asia, North and South Americas. Upon collected materials numerous insect and mite taxa were described.

The scientific output which resulted the above was enormous. He published 158 scientific, 43 popular science articles, 23 reviews, 24 reports

from congresses and symposia and about a hundred of mass media papers.

His outstanding work was recognised by numerous governmental awards.

However, Andrzej is best remembered by his multitude of friends as a warm, open, direct and friendly person. He was a great teacher, encouraging and stimulating new ideas. All who once met him were captivated by his vivid enthusiasm, encouraging energy and wonderful sense of humour. His research legacy will serve as an inspiration for those studying Lepidoptera (and not only Lepidoptera) for many years to come.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to his widow, daughter and to all who knew him personally or through his numerous publications.

Wieczne odpoczywanie racz mu dać Panie.

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1966

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1967

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1968

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1969

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1971

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1972

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1973

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1974

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1975

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1976

Les lépidoptères fossiles de l'ambre. Etat actuel de nos connaissances. *Linn. belg.* **6-7** : 154-169, **8** : 195-208, **9** : 221-233.

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1977

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1979

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1980

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1984

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1985

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1987

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1988

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1989

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1990

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1992

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1993

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1995

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1996

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